



# John Calvin's *Institutes in the Christian Religion* (1541)

A PPA Seminar: Fall 2017

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**Introduction and Overview of the “Institutes of the Christian Religion” (1541)**

Why did Calvin write the *Institutes*?

- Pastoral
- Apologetic

What does the full title of the *Institutes* teach you about the purpose of the book?

*Christianae Religionis Institutio: The Basic Teaching of the Christian Religion comprising almost the whole sum of godliness (piety) and whatever it is necessary to know on the doctrine of salvation (gospel). A newly published work very well worth reading by all who are studious of godliness (piety). A Preface to the most Christian King of France, offering to him this book as a confession of faith by the author, Jean Calvin of Noyon.*

## **The Growth of a Book, the Maturation of an Author**

“The ‘*Institutes*’ had drifted into the market as a sailboat, but by 1559 it had grown into a cargo ship, increasing from six to eighty chapters.” (Selderhuis).

- Confession of Faith (1536)
- Basic Manual on Biblical and Pastoral Theology (1541)
- A Compendium of Theology (1559)

## **Topics and Layout of the Institutes (1541)**

Preface

The Knowledge of God

The Knowledge of Man and Free Will

The Law

Faith, with an Explanation of the Apostle's Creed

Repentance

Justification by Faith and the Merits of Works

The Similarity and Difference between the Old and New Testaments

The Predestination and Providence of God

Prayer, with an Explanation of Our Lord's Prayer

The Sacraments

Baptism

The Lord's Supper

The Five Ceremonies Falsely Called Sacraments

Christian Freedom

The Power of the Church

Civil Government

The Christian Life

**Characteristics of the Institutes (1541)**

Biblical

Systematic

Polemical

Pastoral

Devotional